

Remarks by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Full Committee Hearing: "Copenhagen and Beyond: Is there a Successor to the Kyoto Protocol?"
November 4, 2009

The Obama Administration has made clear its desire to try to reach what it says will be an historic agreement to replace the expiring Kyoto Protocol at the upcoming United Nations Climate Change conference in Copenhagen.

However, there is growing concern about the implications of such an agreement.

Many of the proposals already put forward in the name of tightening global climate change, contain provisions that, if adopted, would do great harm to U.S. interests.

A recurring theme is the establishment of new and unaccountable United Nations-style organizations acting as global regulatory bodies and armed with far-reaching powers that current UN bureaucrats can only dream of.

Perhaps more troubling is that, under many plans, these international bureaucrats would have tens of billions of dollars at their disposal to spread around the world.

Based on past experience, much of that money would undoubtedly disappear into the hands of favored individuals and corrupt governments, never to be seen again.

The prospect of a powerful unaccountable international regulatory bureaucracy leads directly to an even greater concern, namely the undermining of U.S. sovereignty.

Behind the urgent calls for collective action on climate change is the fact that many of the proposals are intended to be mandatory and enforced by international authorities.

There are other problems with the proposals put forth.

One example is the demand by developing countries that the United States and other developed countries pay them tens and even hundreds of billions of dollars in "compensation" for taking action to address climate change.

The proposed sums defy belief.

China's solution is to have the U.S. and the developed nations contribute up to 1% of their Gross Domestic Product to the developing world annually.

For the U.S., that would amount to \$140 billion per year.

Now we've been getting used to speaking in terms of trillions of dollars, but \$140 billion per year, every year, still sounds like a lot of money to me.

Some of the developing countries have insisted that this money or payment to them must be a legally-binding obligation that "cannot be subject to decisions of developed country governments or legislatures."

Basically, under these proposals, the American taxpayer would be required to subsidize other countries, and the U.S. government and, specifically, the U.S. Congress, would have no say in it.

Also raising concerns is the disproportion in the obligations and the idea being considered for the U.S. and other developed nations to voluntarily impose significant restrictions on ourselves, while granting developing countries a pass.

This is one of the most objectionable provisions in the current Kyoto accord, but it has already made its appearance in these new negotiations.

Although China is now the world's largest producer of carbon emissions and India is racing to catch up, these and other countries have repeatedly stated that they have no intention of adopting costly measures to address this situation, although they are happy to have the U.S., Europe, and other developed countries do so.

Only two weeks ago, India's environment minister stated that "India will never accept internationally legally binding emission-reduction targets...[These] are for developed countries and developed countries alone."

Developing countries are also targeting intellectual property rights, or IPR, by demanding free access to clean-energy technologies.

These proposals include prohibiting companies from patenting their own creations, compulsory licensing, and the waiving of all royalties.

One can only imagine the consequences in China and elsewhere from the removal of such intellectual property rights protections, given China's role as the #1 violator of IPR in the world.

Finally, there are the enormous economic costs for the American people.

Many of the proposals being discussed are so sweeping that our entire economy would have to be restructured in order to achieve them.

No credible estimate of the actual costs to our economy in terms of money, lost jobs, and reduced economic output have been put forward.

But at a time of economic distress and widespread unemployment here at home we should avoid imposing additional burdens on U.S. businesses and individuals.

These are but some of the problematic issues relating to the Kyoto accord and negotiations for a successor treaty.

It is my hope that President Obama will bear these facts in mind and not rush to sign the U.S. on to an agreement that could seriously harm our own interests.